

Global DEI Charter for Change introduced at Cannes 2022

The World Federation of Advertising (WFA) officially introduced the [Global DEI Charter for Change](#) at Cannes Lions 2022, with the aim of driving real actions and improving the lived experiences of multiple groups working in the marketing industry.



Source: © raw pixel [123rf](#) WFA officially introduced the Global DEI Charter for Change at Cannes Lions

Developed with input from members of WFA's D&I Taskforce, the [Charter](#) identifies actions that all global organisations need to undertake to ensure a better experience for the one in seven members of the industry who say they could leave their company or the industry due to lack of diversity and inclusion.

While these actions may already be common in some countries, implementing them globally will deliver a huge improvement for many in the industry. The WFA believes they should be minimum requirements for all global organisations.

"The ad industry has considerably stepped up its efforts in recent years when it comes to diversity & inclusion, but the inconvenient truth is that we still fall well short of where we should be.

"Many people in marketing, both at brands and at agencies, are still having a poor lived experience in their workplaces. Most of the issues are global and therefore we call upon all multinational organisations to implement real change across all the markets where they operate.

"We believe that these actions could create real improvement. The time for that change is now," says Stephan Loerke, CEO

of WFA.

The Global DEI Census

The actions are based on the findings of the [WFA-led Global DEI Census](#), which found that the industry still has much to do if it truly wants to build an industry of true inclusion, one that measures its achievements and is open when it falls short.

The 2021 Global DEI Census is the first-ever global industry initiative to measure the scale of the diversity and inclusion challenges facing the profession.

Building on insights from 10,000 in-depth interviews with advertising and marketing professionals in 27 markets, the research provides detailed insight into how the global industry is performing on a wide range of metrics, identifying not just the demographics of participants but also, importantly, their lived experience in the workplace, including their sense of belonging and experience of discrimination.

The study showed that discrimination is most commonly reported on the basis of family status (meaning caregivers for the elderly, the sick or children) and age, which can most often hinder women's career progression.

Charter for Change

The Charter for Change identifies 11 main action areas, four at a leadership level, six to tackle challenges faced by specific groups who have been found to have a worse lived experience, and one around mental health, which has become an area of increased concern, particularly during lockdown.

Actions for Leadership

1. Create a diverse leadership team: Where groups are not represented, leadership must have strategies for short-term progress and beyond.
2. Understand and democratise your company's data: Leaders need to understand the data of inclusion: who is being promoted at every level and what barriers are holding particular groups back.
3. Create transparent policies and publish them: Organisations must strengthen anti-discrimination policies and be transparent in policies, expectations of leaders and employees, and how to escalate situations when needed.
4. Create psychological safety and support: Genuinely safe spaces allow employees to speak up candidly. Companies must invest in qualified facilitation for these spaces and have clear rules of engagement.

Actions to support Underrepresented Groups

- Age: Providing continued coaching, mentoring, and career development for experienced and younger employees alike shows the organisation is committed to supporting and retaining all forms of talent, irrespective of age.
- Caregiving: Ensuring that decision-maker roles include leaders with caregiving responsibilities – for the young, but also for the elderly and the sick – can both serve as a positive example to others and encourage the adoption of flexible policies. Adding emergency caregiver support to employer benefits plans can actively support those with caregiving responsibilities.
- Gender: Businesses need to understand and improve women's lived experiences. Support plans need to be tailored to the cultural differences and employment conditions in each market, so that women feel valued and provided with sufficient support to progress their careers.
- Race and ethnicity: Creating programs and spaces specifically designed to support and empower ethnic minorities helps show commitment and progress to populations that usually report poorer lived experiences.
- Disability and neurodivergence: Businesses should prioritise actions which help normalise and improve understanding of all forms of disability. Accessibility needs must be discovered and accommodated as part of the employee onboarding experience.
- Sexual orientation and gender identity: Companies must have policies in place to protect but also support LGBTQ+.

employees. Benefits including pay, bonuses, parental leave, health insurance should be explicitly available to same-sex couples. Non-binary identifying employees should have their chosen identity recognised.

Action on Mental Health

- Providing and continually promoting mental health benefits so that they are accessible and top of mind is important. People managers should be trained in how to respond to mental health issues and have supportive discussions around mental health with employees.

Looking ahead, WFA is planning to once again join forces with leading industry organisations to run a second wave of research on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion in 2023.

To download a copy of the Charter, click [here](#).

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